

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO



TONI ATKINS
COUNCILMEMBER
THIRD DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: George Biagi

(619)236-6633 Fax:(619)595-1481

gbiagi@san-diego.gov

Councilmember Atkins Commends Police for Prompt Efficient Response to Bomb Threat at San Diego Zoo Lauds School District and City Staff for Working Together to Ensure Safety of School Children

San Diego - Local and federal law enforcement officials today called for the evacuation of the San Diego Zoo when a credible bomb threat was determined to exist at the world famous park located in Balboa Park. The threat occurred just two days after the tragic terrorist attacks in New York City, Washington, D.C., and rural Pennsylvania.

"Sadly, local and law enforcement officials were called on earlier today to investigate what might have been a serious threat to the zoo, its visitors and the animals housed there, and this threat necessitated an evacuation of the zoo and a nearby school," said Councilmember Atkins. "I'd like to commend the San Diego Police Department for their prompt and efficient actions in insuring the safety of zoo visitors and personnel, as well as the safety of school children at nearby Roosevelt Middle School. Because of their efforts, no one panicked, and no one was injured."

Ultimately, no bomb was discovered. However, Atkins stressed the importance of taking every necessary precaution in light of recent events in New York City and Washington, D.C. "Local and federal law enforcement agencies acted responsibly and appropriately given the current climate. Thankfully, no bomb was found. However, you can't take these types of credible threats lightly."

Earlier in the day, a cooperative law enforcement task force of local and federal officials determined that a credible, serious bomb threat existed at the San Diego Zoo. Pursuant to this investigation it was determined that an immediate and orderly evacuation of all zoo visitors and personnel should take place. According to police sources, the evacuation took place without incident and the zoo was promptly cleared of all visitors and staff except for essential police and safety personnel. Zoo officials indicated that pursuant to the threat, the animals were moved to a safe location within the zoo. Students at nearby Roosevelt Junior High School, which borders the zoo to the north, were evacuated to Alice Birney Elementary School in University Heights. Additionally, City Manager Mike Uberuaga directed additional City staff to assist with the Roosevelt Middle School "6 to 6" after school program, which was also relocated to Birney Elementary School. Parents of students were contacted by the San Diego Unified School District concerning their children's whereabouts and were given the option

to pick up their children immediately if so desired.

"The cooperation between the school district and the City of San Diego was fantastic. It helped insure that the safety of our children was kept a top priority," Atkins said. "It's reassuring to know that people will pull together when needed in a time of potential crisis."

Atkins agreed with the decision to evacuate. "In light of recent events, we are all much more sensitive to the safety of our friends, family members, co-workers and neighbors. Since Tuesday's tragic occurrences, both the City and County of San Diego law enforcement, fire and emergency services, along with various federal agencies, have been working diligently to assure the safety of all San Diegans and to secure public buildings and locations. Today's bomb threat at the San Diego Zoo underscores just how difficult a task this is."

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